

VIEWS AND AESTHETICS

AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

This section discusses view impacts of the alternatives with regard to the City's SEPA Public View Protection policies, including the topics of public viewpoints, views of landmarks, skyline views, and views from scenic routes. The discussion also attempts to recognize other City objectives pertaining to urban design, aesthetics and the future development of Downtown. It is important to acknowledge that the discussion of views, aesthetic values, and related impacts is highly subjective. It also should be noted that the City's existing zoning regulations already accommodate a level of future development that will affect views from some locations, over time. Where possible, the impact analysis in this EIS attempts to identify the additional increment of view impact attributable to the alternatives and the relative differences in impacts among the alternatives.

Public Viewpoints

The City's SEPA rules identify 87 locations where project impacts on views of natural and built features are to be addressed (SMC Section 25.05.675 P.2.a.i., Attachment 1). Among the 87 designated viewpoints, approximately 26 locations have views of the Downtown skyline and/or views across Downtown toward natural features like Mt. Rainier, the Olympic Mountains or Elliott Bay. From some viewpoints, Downtown is just one of several observable features, and may or may not be the most significant. Some of the views of Downtown are quite distant, and changes of the magnitude studied in this analysis would be imperceptible. Table L-1 in Appendix L provides an inventory of identified SEPA viewpoints, listing observable features specified by SEPA for view protection and a brief description of the nature of available views from each location.

Certain viewpoints are considered to have greater significance to this study because of the prominence of views toward Downtown and because their location in relation to the study area creates the greatest potential for impacts. These include Kerry Park, Bhy Kracke Park, Belvedere Viewpoint, Jose Rizal Park, Four Columns Park, Hamilton Viewpoint, Harbor Vista Park, Alki Beach Park, Pac-Med Bldg. (U.S. Public Health Service Hospital) Viewpoint, Harborview Hospital Viewpoint, Victor Steinbrueck Park, Waterfront Park, Myrtle Edwards Park, and Gasworks Park.

These viewpoints provide several of the "postcard" views of Seattle's Downtown and in many cases also offer views toward Puget Sound, Lake Union, Mt. Rainier or the Olympics. Harborview Hospital Viewpoint and Four Columns Park are the viewpoints nearest Downtown's central office core, featuring both nearby cityscape and territorial views. Victor Steinbrueck Park offers attractive views east and south toward the Pike Place Market vicinity and the office/retail core, south toward Mt. Rainier, and west toward Puget Sound and the Olympics. Because of their greater significance and potential for negative outcomes, this analysis focuses on these viewpoints to assess impacts of the various alternatives.

View Protected Landmarks

SEPA specifies *"it is the City's policy to protect public views of historic landmarks designated by the Landmarks Preservation Board which, because of their prominence of location or contrasts of siting, age, or scale, are easily identifiable visual features of their neighborhood or the City and contribute to the distinctive quality or identity of their neighborhood or the City."* Twenty-three designated landmarks within (or visible from) the study area are identified for public view protection, based on this designation criterion used by the Landmarks Board. Eight of these are located within the study area, seven are within the retail core or Belltown, and eight are outside the study area but visible from portions of Downtown (see Table 37).

Table 37
Inventory of View-Protected Landmarks Related to Study Area

Within the Downtown Study Area	Outside Study Area But Within Downtown
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rainier Club • 1st Avenue Group/Waterfront Center • Times Square Building • Hoge Building • McGraw Square • Terminal Sales Building • Lyon Building • Camlin Hotel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coliseum Theater • Olympic Tower/United Shopping Tower • Northern Bank & Trust/Seaboard Building • Bon Marché • Mann Building • Frederick & Nelson Building (Nordstrom) • Guiry Hotel (Belltown)
Outside Downtown But Visible from Downtown Study Area	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Space Needle • Trinity Parish Church (First Hill) • Immanuel Lutheran Church (Cascade) • Seattle First Baptist Church (First Hill) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Queen Anne High School • Summit School/Northwest School (Pike-Pine) • Pacific Medical Center (Beacon Hill) • Wintonia Hotel (Pike-Pine)

Some of the landmarks identified above are very visible due to their height and/or prominent physical setting. Pacific Medical Center and Queen Anne High School are noticeable skyline features outside the study area, visible from several locations due to their location on Beacon Hill and the ridge of Queen Anne Hill. A few church steeples, such as those of the Trinity Parish Church and Immanuel Lutheran Church, are also locally visible from portions of the study area. Several structures located outside of Downtown are visible from limited locations within Downtown, including the Wintonia Hotel in Pike/Pine or the church steeples mentioned above. However, the visual enjoyment of these structures is primarily of interest to the neighborhood in which they are located, making visibility from adjacent areas like Downtown less of a priority.

Several of the other view-protected landmarks are distinctive older buildings that contribute to the overall visual and architectural quality of Downtown. These buildings are most visible within one or two blocks where the viewer can appreciate the quality of the building within its urban context. Examples include the Coliseum Theater, Rainier Club, Times Square Building, Hoge Building, Bon Marché, Frederick & Nelson (Nordstrom) Building, Terminal Sales Building, and a grouping of buildings along First Avenue. Some of these buildings gain added visual prominence due to their location at shifts in the street grid, where they terminate views down the street and may be visible for several blocks. The Josephinum's location at the "bend" in Second Avenue at Stewart Street is an example.

Most Downtown structures identified as view protected-landmarks are integrated with surrounding development and observable primarily from streets in the immediate vicinity. However, some buildings, like the Camlin Hotel, are more visually prominent because of their location in less built-up portions of Downtown. The increased visibility of the Camlin Hotel is due primarily to its location amid surface parking lots and the open pit of the Metro Transit Station. Typically, such a building would be absorbed over time into a fully-developed blockfront, remaining visible only from adjacent streets.

SEPA is not specific about the nature of protection provided for views of landmarks. There is little guidance about where the view of a particular landmark should be protected from, or the amount or

particular aspects of the view that warrant protection. Table L-3 in Appendix L describes the visibility and context of the studied landmarks to better understand their visual prominence.

The City Council addressed this issue as it related to protecting views of the Space Needle, one of the identified view-protected landmarks. In November 2001, the City's SEPA view protection policies were clarified with respect to Space Needle views, recognizing that *"restricting development throughout the city to protect all public views of the Space Needle is inconsistent with the City's land use, housing and other policies and goals, as more fully described in the report, 'Seattle View Protection Policies: Space Needle Executive Report and Recommendations,' April 2001"* (Ordinance 120605). To clarify and focus efforts to protect the most critical views, ten specific protected public views of the Space Needle were identified, including those from:

- Alki Beach Park
- Bhy Kracke Park
- Gasworks Park
- Hamilton Viewpoint
- Kerry Park
- Myrtle Edwards Park
- Olympic Sculpture Park
- Seacrest Park
- Seattle Center
- Volunteer Park

In addition, the April 2001 report recommended that other culturally and historically significant structures or features be evaluated based on a citywide viewpoints analysis to further clarify SEPA policy.

Scenic Routes

The City's SEPA policies address the protection of public views from City streets designated as scenic routes. *"It is the City's policy to protect public views of significant natural and human-made features: Mount Rainier, the Olympic and Cascade Mountains, the downtown skyline, and major bodies of water including Puget Sound, Lake Washington, Lake Union and the Ship Canal, from public places consisting of the specified viewpoints, parks, scenic routes, and view corridors identified in Attachment 1."* (SMC Section 25.05.675 P.2.a.i. and Attachment 1).

The City's designated SEPA scenic routes are identified on a map as Exhibit 1 to the City's SEPA policies (SMC 25.05.675, Exhibit 1). Since SEPA does not identify where view locations occur along these routes, or specify the object of view, it is difficult to assess which characteristics of these scenic routes are to be protected under SEPA policies. Some scenic routes are oriented toward the aesthetic qualities of the immediate surroundings (such as green boulevards, neighborhood commercial streets or adjoining parks), while others have more distant views of natural features (mountains and major water bodies) and the city skyline. There is great variety in visual character along the routes—some portions do not have any appreciable scenic qualities.

Assessing view conditions on scenic routes also needs to consider the intended observer and direction of travel in relation to the view. Many of these routes, like Aurora Avenue, the Alaskan Way Viaduct, and I-5, accommodate high volumes of traffic traveling at high speeds. While certain view features may be visible from these routes, the fact that the observer is traveling at high speed may limit the duration of specific views to brief glimpses. Some routes, like 5th Avenue, are one-way streets, limiting the direction of views for motorists and transit riders. Other scenic routes may be traveled by slower traffic, including pedestrians and bicyclists, potentially expanding the scope and direction of views, as well as the length of time that features remain visible to the observer.

Scenic routes were reviewed and traveled to determine the route segments that provide views of the Downtown study area potentially affected by proposed changes to height and density limits. Scenic views along several routes are intermittently blocked by topography, existing development and vegetation, but locations with higher elevations, wide rights-of-way and/or unobstructed view corridors offer the best opportunities for views toward Downtown (see Figure 27). Examples of scenic route segments with good views toward Downtown include:

- Harbor Avenue SW
- West Seattle Bridge
- Magnolia Bridge
- Northbound SR 99 from the Alaskan Way Viaduct
- Southbound SR 99 north of Battery Street Tunnel
- 12th Avenue S. (including bridge over I-90)
- Small segments of California Ave, Admiral Way
- I-5 southbound at north end of Ship Canal Bridge
- I-5 southbound near Eastlake on-ramp
- I-5 southbound, Lakeview Blvd to Olive Way
- I-5 northbound, S. Spokane St. to Yesler Way
- I-5 northbound, Yesler Way to Seneca St.
- I-5 northbound, near S. Andover St.

Other scenic routes closer to Downtown Seattle with Downtown views (due to topography or street orientation) include: Dexter Avenue N., Aurora Avenue N., Westlake Avenue N., Fairview Avenue, Olive Way and Yesler Way. Dexter Avenue N., Westlake Avenue N. and Fairview Avenue offer views of the Downtown skyline as they approach the study area. Olive Way (near its intersection with Denny Way and at I-5) offers limited views of Elliott Bay, but scenic views are limited primarily to portions of the skyline, due to intervening buildings and trees. Yesler Way westbound between approximately 8th Avenue and 5th Avenue offers good views of Elliott Bay and the Olympic Mountains, with skyline and territorial views as it passes over I-5.

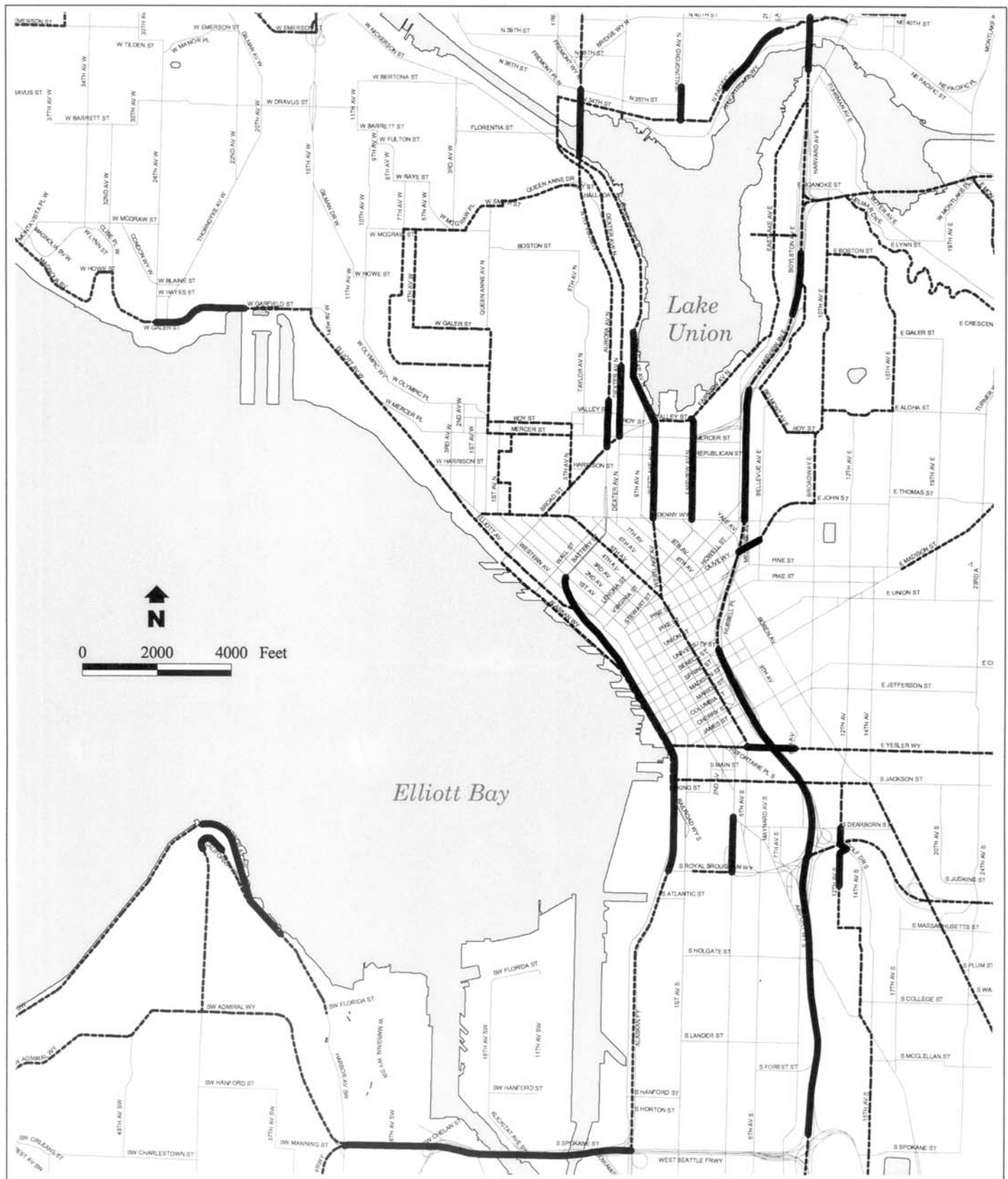
Scenic routes that pass through Downtown Seattle include 5th Avenue, Westlake Avenue, Elliott Avenue, the Alaskan Way Viaduct and Alaskan Way. Along these routes, the immediate surroundings of Downtown development dominate views. At this close range, there are few skyline views of Downtown, except for the Alaskan Way Viaduct (primarily northbound) which has good views of Downtown due to the roadway elevation. Fifth Avenue through the Commercial Core offers occasional views of Elliott Bay at street intersections. The Alaskan Way Viaduct generally impairs views toward Downtown from Alaskan Way and Elliott Avenue; the primary views from these streets are instead oriented toward the waterfront.

Skyline

Due to hilly topography and the presence of large water bodies, several locations offer views of the Downtown Seattle skyline within the context of the surrounding natural setting. Familiar images of the Downtown skyline include views from the west across Elliott Bay, from the north across Lake Union and from the south across the flat, low industrial areas of the Duwamish Valley. Skyline views are also possible from the east from the western slopes of Capitol Hill and a few more distant areas.

The Downtown skyline image is composed of simple elements: building clusters, landforms, water, and singular landmark structures and features. The characteristics of these elements—their color, scale, complexity and variation—also contribute to the image. The composition of these elements defines the image for the viewer and varies depending on the direction and distance of the viewpoint.

Views From the West. The skyline from the west is generally viewed across Elliott Bay and framed to the north by the Space Needle and to the south by the stadiums. The hillsides of Capitol Hill and Beacon Hill provide a green backdrop for the Downtown skyline on either side of the office core cluster. A band of older buildings along 1st and Western Avenues and the linear structure of the Alaskan Way Viaduct



SCENIC ROUTE SEGMENTS WITH VIEWS TOWARD DOWNTOWN

FIGURE 27

Strategic Planning Office
City of Seattle
May 20, 2002

- Segments with Views toward Downtown
- - - - - Other Scenic Route Segments

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dwtbwns/scenicw/dwtbwns.apr

create a more horizontal "base" that provides a transition in development scale stepping up from Elliott Bay to the office core. While the older, lower development of the retail core continues to create a break in the skyline profile, taller office and hotel towers are filling in to the north. Taller residential towers in Belltown extend the highrise profile even further north. Downtown areas once distinguished by their height are now less distinguishable within the context of the skyline.

Views From the North. In views from the north looking south, the skyline contrasts dramatically with the low, horizontal plane of Lake Union and the relatively low structures of South Lake Union and the Denny Triangle. From some locations north of Downtown, such as the higher elevations of Queen Anne, Mt. Rainier also becomes part of the view, appearing either to the east or west of the skyline depending on the observation point. The landforms and development of Capitol Hill and First Hill define the eastern edge. While the lower buildings of the retail core provide some transition in height north to south, more recent highrise development north of the core make this transition less apparent. Given the shift in the block pattern that occurs along Denny Way and again along Olive Way, streets provide fewer "gaps" in the visual pattern of development.

Views From the South. Generally, the tallest and bulkiest structures are concentrated on the hillside of the office core. From the south, the towers rise up with the hillside from Elliott Bay, with the low structures of Pioneer Square and the International District in the foreground. The more horizontal aspect and finer grain and scale of these older structures add interest and contrast to the vertical thrust of the larger office towers that generally dominate the view. Depending on the observation point, the green bluff of Magnolia and the Space Needle are visible to the west, and development on First Hill extends the skyline view further east.

Views From the East. Because of topography, panoramic views of the skyline from the east are more limited. Much of First Hill faces the band of the tallest office core skyscrapers stretching along I-5. However, the low scale of development in South Lake Union and the Denny Triangle provide adjacent Pike-Pine and Capitol Hill areas with good views toward the existing skyline and, in some locations, features beyond Downtown to the west.

Built Features. The Space Needle, sports stadiums and structures sited at the crest of ridges like Harborview Hospital and Pac-Med Hospital, are recognized visual landmark features because of their size and location in the skyline profile. Generally, the Space Needle retains its dominance as a skyline landmark because of the lower height of development separating Seattle Center from Downtown highrise areas. Landmarks like the Smith Tower and King Street Station also remain visually prominent because of their location on the outer edge of the core skyline. Their contrast in scale and architectural style makes them stand out against the backdrop of more recent larger highrise development.

While Seattle continues to experience vertical growth, much of its natural setting has not been obscured. Even with an evolving skyline, the topography is still apparent, there continue to be views of green hillsides and the Downtown's place in relation to its natural setting remains clear. New development continues to break the silhouette of the background hills as seen from the water and West Seattle, but glimpses of greenery remain. The street grid has helped maintain these conditions. Because Downtown's tallest structures have historically been concentrated in an area platted with smaller square blocks aligned in a regular street grid pattern, the streets themselves have maintained a regular and frequent spacing between towers. When aligned with streets, views often are unobstructed through Downtown, providing visual links with adjacent areas. Because of the relatively low intensity of development in areas adjacent to the core, views from streets in the core can often continue through adjacent areas, even when the direction of the street is altered by shifts in the street grid pattern.

Other Non-Protected Views

Views from areas adjacent to Downtown. The rising slopes of Queen Anne Hill, Capitol Hill, First Hill and Beacon Hill provide numerous views of the Downtown skyline, and, in many cases, through the skyline to other features beyond. Though somewhat more distant, the east and northeast facing slopes of West Seattle and portions of Magnolia bluff further expand the viewshed that includes the Downtown skyline, as well as other natural features. With the growth of Downtown, the skyline has become increasingly more prominent in the public and private views from these surrounding areas.

The Downtown skyline, a combination of Downtown's "natural" topography and the artificial topography of its buildings, reaches heights in excess of 1,000 feet above sea level at the apex. The current building "envelope"—defined by the maximum height limit—for much of the study area ranges between 240 and 540 feet, with several existing structures exceeding these limits. By comparison, the elevations of the slopes facing Downtown range from approximately 400 feet on Queen Anne, to between 300 and 350 feet on Capitol Hill/First Hill, and 320 feet on Beacon Hill. As development has occurred over time under allowable height limits, some of the "gaps" that previously existed in the skyline have been "filled in", reducing opportunities for views over or through the Downtown skyline to features beyond, like Elliott Bay and the Olympic and Cascade Mountains. In some cases, the skyline itself has emerged as the principal object of view.

Some hillside locations continue to have views of significant natural features in the same viewshed as the Downtown skyline. Portions of the west slope of Capitol Hill provide glimpses of Elliott Bay and the Olympic Mountains beyond. These features are even visible from some locations on First Hill through the highrises of the Downtown core. From some locations on Queen Anne, Mount Rainier and the foothills of the Cascade Mountains are visible to one side of the skyline. Views eastward from the higher elevations of some West Seattle locations include the Cascade Mountains as a backdrop visible above the existing Downtown skyline or through gaps between buildings.

City policy, as reflected in the zoning that applies to areas adjacent to Downtown, recognizes that the loss of some views is an unavoidable consequence of development in dense urban environments. However, the zoned height limits help provide a balance between objectives for accommodating desired levels of development while maintaining reasonable view opportunities.

Views from within Downtown. The presence of views outward to surrounding areas and distant natural features is an important aspect of Downtown Seattle's unique identity. In many instances, surrounding natural features remain visible from locations within Downtown because of the low height of development in peripheral areas. This visual connection with open expanses of water, surrounding green hillsides and distant mountains not only visually introduces elements of nature into the densely built center city environment, but also lends a sense of openness and relief. These views are also important to "wayfinding," helping to guide movement within and through Downtown by providing reference points that identify locations in relation to their surroundings.

Most of these views are not covered under current SEPA view protection measures. However, several streets within Downtown that provide views toward Elliott Bay have been designated in the Land Use Code as View Corridors. Prohibitions on skybridges and restrictions on street use and street vacations apply to these designated view corridors, and on specified street segments, private development is required to provide setbacks to enhance views.

IMPACTS

The existing land use and zoning regulations in the study area currently allow new buildings ranging in height from 125 to 540 feet. As such, future development already can add quite a bit of building bulk that may alter some existing views. Identifying the visual effects of development already allowed by existing regulations is not the main purpose of this section. Rather, the discussion attempts to identify the *additional increment* of view impact attributable to the zoning changes in Alternatives 1, 2 and 3, and the relative differences in impacts among the alternatives.

Alternative 1 – High End Height and Density Increase

PUBLIC VIEWPOINTS

Of the approximately 30 identified locations with viewpoints or view protection status, approximately 11 would experience minimal or no impacts, due to their distance from Downtown and absence of any potential impairment of view features. Of the remaining 19 viewpoints, most would experience change only in the sense that the number and arrangement of buildings composing the Downtown skyline would be different from what is observable today due to changes over time. This type of change does not vary substantially among the alternatives and is not considered a significant adverse impact.

Table L-2 in Appendix L summarizes observations about visual changes at all of the studied viewpoints. Two viewpoints—Four Columns Park (Pike-Pine) and Harborview (First Hill)—warrant further discussion with regard to potential visual impairment of views. Three other viewpoints—Kerry Park (Queen Anne), Belvedere and Hamilton Viewpoints (West Seattle) are discussed later in this section with regard to changes in the Downtown skyline.

Four Columns Park

Four Columns Park, located just east of I-5 at Pike and Boren, is one of the closest viewpoints to the Downtown office/retail core. Its viewshed includes the portion of the study area likely to experience the greatest change. Today, views include the nearest buildings across I-5, such as the Convention Center with its canopy over Pike Street, Metropolitan Park Towers, Paramount Theater and Camlin Hotel, the larger office core buildings in the western middle ground, and Queen Anne Hill and a segment of Olympic Mountains in the background to the northwest. Vacant or underdeveloped lots and the Convention Place transit tunnel station currently provide relatively large open expanses allowing views toward the west and northwest. Some building projects already approved or under construction would reduce views toward the northwest over time.

With probable concentrations of future development in the Denny Triangle under any alternative, as well as continued development outside the study area in Belltown, views from Four Columns Park toward the Olympic Mountains and Queen Anne (including the Queen Anne High School landmark) would gradually be obscured. The City Council in 2001 addressed the issue of protecting views of the Space Needle from public locations, including Four Columns Park. Because of the particular characteristics of this viewpoint, and the potential conflicts with City policies targeting concentrated housing and employment growth in the adjacent Denny Triangle area, the Council determined that Four Columns Park would not be included among the locations where Space Needle views would be protected under SEPA. However, Four Columns Park remains a SEPA viewpoint, with the most prominent view feature being the evolving Downtown skyline to the west and northwest.

Over time, this viewpoint would increasingly be oriented to foreground and middle ground views of Downtown's buildings and skyline across I-5. Views of other features beyond Downtown from Four

Columns Park will likely be gradually obscured by future development, even under existing regulations. The amount of impact attributable to Alternative 1 would be the additional 100 feet of height and increased bulk allowed for commercial development in the nearby DOC 2 and DMC zones. However, it is not expected to cause different types of visual impairment than are already possible under existing regulations. Under all alternatives, views to the north/northwest across the Denny Triangle are likely to be altered by future development. Lesser alteration of views is expected toward the Downtown skyline to the west/southwest, due to lesser amounts of expected future development.

Harborview Viewpoint

Harborview Viewpoint is perched above and east of I-5, with views toward the office core, the southern portion of Elliott Bay, the Olympic Mountains, Duwamish lowlands and even Mount Rainier to the south. This park/plaza is approximately one block in length between Jefferson and Terrace streets, plus a smaller elevated plaza on a newer structure to the south. Views toward the office core encompass buildings nearest I-5 from the King County Jail north to approximately Two Union Square, as well as other buildings further west within the office core. There are only a couple of narrow gaps between buildings allowing views through to Puget Sound. Future development with or without zoning changes would not generate significant adverse impacts on views toward the central office core because future development would contribute to the skyline without adversely impairing existing views.

Views to the south and southwest encompass the south end of Elliott Bay, West Seattle and the Olympics beyond, the Duwamish lowlands, Pioneer Square and the athletic stadiums. In the foreground to the southwest and considerably lower than the viewpoint is a vacant sloping open space tract and parking lot property between Yesler Way and Jefferson Streets, 5th and 6th Avenues. Future highrise development in this area would probably obscure views to the southwest of a portion of Elliott Bay and West Seattle. This would occur even with the current zoned height limit of 240 feet, which allows increases in height up to 20 percent (288 feet) under special conditions. The proposed change in height limit to 312 feet and increase in permitted commercial density could result in taller, bulkier buildings within the identified block, with a greater total amount of visual impairment. However, under either height limit, the views of the south end of Elliott Bay and West Seattle would be similarly impaired. Views further to the south would not be affected.

VIEW PROTECTED LANDMARKS

The potential adverse impacts of Alternative 1 on view-protected landmarks would be generally similar in magnitude to the impacts of Alternatives 2, 3 and 4, because similar physical factors are relevant to all alternatives. Most of the landmark sites and structures specified for view protection under SEPA are relatively small compared to potential future development allowed by land use regulations. The visual prominence of these structures will diminish as bigger buildings occupy adjacent sites under any alternative. Even modestly sized new buildings could impair views of landmark sites or structures visible from distant streets or viewpoints. This would be most noticeable in the lesser-developed Denny Triangle area where surface parking lots and low-scale buildings currently contribute to greater visibility across larger areas. Future development may also contribute to visual contrasts of age and scale by placing newer, larger buildings adjacent to or near landmark structures.

Alternative 1 would represent the greatest amount of increase in density limits (FARs) and height limits, resulting in greater building bulk and scale in some locations that could potentially impact view-protected landmarks. This could potentially result in the greatest contrast in scale between existing and new development of any alternative. Alternative 1 would also change the zoning across the most area of any alternative. The areas subject to zoning changes and potential impacts on view-protected landmarks would include the Denny Triangle's DOC 2 office core and essentially all of the DMC-zoned area north

to Denny Way, and the DOC 1 office core and peripheral DMC and DOC 2-zoned areas along the edges of the Commercial Core.

Interpretation of Site-Specific Landmark View Impacts

Of the 23 view-protected landmarks identified above in Table 37, 11 would be subject to some level of potential impact from future development in the study area. Those without impact potential are located in areas where zoning would not change. Public locations where impacts on these views are considered include SEPA-identified viewpoints or public parks, designated scenic routes, public street rights-of-way, and public parks not identified by SEPA. An assessment of existing view conditions from these locations is provided for each landmark in Table L-3 of Appendix L. Table L-4 of Appendix L provides an overall, general interpretation of the potential impacts of future development on each view-protected landmark.

Changes in views from various locations toward Queen Anne High School and the Camlin Hotel are the most notable impacts identified in Table L-4 of Appendix L. Views toward Queen Anne High School are intermittently possible from many locations in the northern portion of Downtown and even further south along certain streets. These landmarks contribute to visual interest and character when viewed by people moving around Downtown, and also contribute to the overall quality of skyline views. Reduction of this sort of view from public streets is inevitable as future development adds more building bulk to Downtown properties. But it is difficult to quantify how much loss of this type of view would be “too much.” Many opportunities will remain to glimpse Queen Anne High School from many locations.

The potential landmark view impacts to the Camlin Hotel relate to its existing condition as a structure surrounded by vacant parking lots, and the future possible development of adjacent highrise buildings. By filling all or most of the vacant lots with new buildings, views toward the Camlin from some streets would be obscured by the new buildings, and the bulk and scale of the new buildings would probably change the perception of the Camlin Hotel (refer to Figure 21 in Height, Bulk and Scale). The relative impact would depend upon how the adjacent buildings physically relate to the Camlin. Given historic development patterns, Downtown buildings like the Camlin Hotel that occupy mid-block sites typically would be surrounded by other development and ultimately absorbed as part of a fully-developed blockfront. This inevitably would result in a reduction of the structure's overall visibility.

The diminished prominence of the Rainier Club (on 4th Avenue) and the Terminal Sales Building (on 1st Avenue), and potentially lost views from the Denny Triangle toward the Wintonia Hotel (Pike-Pine vicinity) are also noted as impacts under all alternatives.

Figure 20 (refer to the Height, Bulk and Scale section) illustrates how future development might look in the vicinity of two landmark buildings, the Rainier Club (not depicted) and the nearby Leamington/Pacific Hotel and Apartments on 4th Avenue. Looking south down 4th Avenue at Marion Street, the existing urban environment already is comprised of interesting contrasts in building age and scale. The low scale of the Pacific Hotel and Rainier Club provide an enclave of pedestrian-oriented building scale among the surrounding skyscrapers. The historic low-density structures with the generous setback of the Rainier Club provide a feeling of airiness and welcome sunlight into the commercial core.

Under Alternative 1, future development includes a 22-story office building on a half-block site in the next block to the south. The additional height and bulk of this structure relative to the 18-story building illustrating development under existing conditions would have little added impact on the character of this view and the relationship already established between these landmark structures and surrounding highrise development. In many respects, the presence of these buildings is even more dramatic because of the contrasts they provide in scale and architectural style.

Figure 22 (refer to the Height, Bulk and Scale section) illustrates how future development might look in the vicinity of the Terminal Sales Building. Today, the Terminal Sales Building and One Pacific Tower, its neighbor to the north, stand out as the largest structures in the area. Another landmark, the Moore Theater, is visible on the south side of Virginia Street one block to the east. Future development behind the Terminal Sales Building will likely be significantly taller and bulkier than the landmark structures; roughly ranging between 31 stories in Alternative 1 and 24 stories in Alternatives 2, 3, and 4. Under any of the alternatives, future development would reduce the "open" character of Virginia Street that exists today because of the relatively low scale of development abutting the street. The prominence of the Terminal Sales Building will also diminish as larger structures occupy adjacent sites.

SCENIC ROUTES

Changes to height and density limits in Downtown would affect specific scenic routes differently, depending upon how close the routes are to the study area. In many cases, the changes would affect only the general composition of the skyline as viewed from a distant location. This type of impact is addressed in the public viewpoint and skyline view impact discussions, and is not considered a significant adverse impact. Scenic routes that would experience this limited impact include:

- Harbor Avenue SW
- West Seattle Bridge
- Magnolia Bridge
- 12th Avenue S. (including bridge over I-90)
- Small segments of California Ave, Admiral Way
- I-5 southbound at north end of Ship Canal Bridge
- I-5 southbound near Eastlake on-ramp
- I-5 northbound, S. Spokane St. to S. Jackson St.
- I-5 northbound, near S. Andover St.
- N. Pacific Street (Wallingford)

Several scenic routes approach and enter Downtown. View changes along these routes would primarily involve changes in the skyline and greater presence of denser buildings in the middle ground or background of views. Once in Downtown, the views become more confined to adjacent development and whatever outward views may be possible down intersecting streets. These routes include:

- Dexter Avenue
- Westlake Avenue north of Denny Way
- Fairview Avenue
- I-5 southbound, Lakeview Blvd to Olive Way
- Southbound SR 99 north of Battery Street Tunnel
- Olive Way
- Yesler Way
- I-5 northbound, Yesler Way to Seneca St.

Of these routes, the scenic qualities of Dexter, Westlake and Fairview Avenues, Olive Way, southbound SR 99 and northbound Interstate 5 would not be adversely impacted by future development in the study area. The following scenic route segments were studied in greater detail because of the potential for impact and because they provide perspectives from different approaches to the study area.

Yesler Way

Yesler Way is a scenic route providing views of the Downtown study area from the east and south. As westbound travelers on Yesler Way approach and cross I-5, wide-ranging views are possible on the overpass bridge and descent toward Downtown. Beyond the Smith Tower is an expansive view of the Duwamish lowlands to the south, the southern end of Elliott Bay, West Seattle, the Olympic Mountains and Pioneer Square. To the north of the Smith Tower is an extensive view of office and government buildings in the office core of Downtown, extending to the Two Union Square building. In the foreground of this view are the King County jail and the vacant parcels of "Goat Hill." Future development on this property could obscure some of the foreground views toward the King County Administration Building and King County Jail, but would not block views toward natural features or generate significant adverse

impacts on this scenic route. Similarly, the alternatives would not result in further blocking of views toward Elliott Bay, the Smith Tower or view elements to the south.

I-5 Southbound, Lakeview Blvd to Olive Way

This scenic route segment approaches and passes along the eastern edge of the Denny Triangle, the portion of the study area where the greatest amount of redevelopment is expected to occur. Observers along this route segment are vehicle occupants traveling at high speed, which limits the duration of views. The greatest extent of highest-quality views occurs north of the study area where the existing height of development to the west is relatively low and I-5 is an elevated structure. Vehicle occupants traveling southbound can glimpse a territorial view of Queen Anne Hill, Lake Union and Seattle Center to the west, only briefly interrupted by a few buildings along the I-5 edge of South Lake Union. There is also a prominent view ahead to the south of the large Downtown office core buildings.

Views of Denny Triangle vicinity buildings are possible along the route, but only for brief durations given travel speeds. Approaching Olive Way, the higher elevation of the embankment along the Downtown edge of I-5 limits views west through the Denny Triangle. Also, buildings near I-5 such as the Metropolitan Park towers and the new Marriott SpringHill Suites Hotel block some Denny Triangle vistas from this route. It is likely that the best territorial and skyline views from this route segment north of Denny Way will remain, even if future development occurs in the Denny Triangle.

Scenic Routes Through Downtown

The character of adjacent development would change to some degree along three scenic routes, 5th Avenue, Westlake Avenue and the Alaskan Way Viaduct, all of which run directly through the Downtown. Observers of these views are likely to include pedestrians and bicyclists, as well as motorists and transit riders. The route along Fifth Avenue would experience modest changes due to potential redevelopment on adjacent sites. Views along portions of this route are already impaired by the existing monorail structure. Views along Westlake Avenue would experience somewhat greater change if larger-scale development occurs on several abutting properties north of Stewart Street, creating a stronger sense of enclosure and narrowing the scope of views along this route. The view from the northbound Alaskan Way Viaduct would be modestly altered as available properties in the Western Avenue vicinity or other properties east of First Avenue are redeveloped. However, these additional buildings are not likely to adversely alter the overall quality of the upland views from the Alaskan Way Viaduct. Alaskan Way and Elliott Avenue, the other routes through Downtown, would not likely experience adverse impacts due to their location either along the edge or outside of the study area. Along these routes, the primary view is of Elliott Bay to the west, with adjacent development and the Alaskan Way Viaduct already limiting views toward the study area to the east.

SKYLINE

Future development in the Downtown study area, with or without changes in zoned height and density, will alter the shape, character and extent of the Downtown skyline over time. New towers will be added to the existing clusters of buildings forming the skyline, and taller buildings will appear in areas currently dominated by lower-height development. The interpretation of impacts to skyline views from the north and west uses the examples of Kerry Park on Queen Anne Hill, the Belvedere and Hamilton Viewpoints in West Seattle, and views from a location near I-5 (approximately Melrose Avenue) on Capitol Hill.

Views from the north—Kerry Park. Kerry Park provides views of the Downtown skyline from a relatively high elevation to the north. These views would change over time with future development in Denny Triangle, which would contribute to the eastern foreground of the skyline view (see Figure 28). Future additional Denny Triangle development would contribute to further obscuring of the Cascade

foothills that are in the background of southeastern views from Kerry Park. Numerous existing buildings in the office core and on First Hill have already obscured most of the foothill view. The large mass of Mt. Rainier would not be blocked by future development in the study area, with or without zoning changes. Mt. Rainier is far enough west in the Kerry Park view that future development in the intervening areas is not likely to obscure or infringe upon the mountain. It is interesting to note that some of the newer highrise residential buildings in the Belltown vicinity extend a bit above the local horizon, infringing upon small portions of the foothills visually below (north of) Mt. Rainier. However, this portion of Belltown is not included in areas of possible zoning changes. None of the view impacts to Kerry Park's viewpoint are interpreted to be significant adverse impacts.

The specific impact of Alternative 1 would be to allow 100 additional feet of height and greater density in the Denny Triangle area that is the foreground or middle ground of these views. This is not interpreted to be a significant adverse impact.

Views from the west—Belvedere and Hamilton Viewpoints. These viewpoints in West Seattle provide views of the skyline from the southwest at a relatively greater distance than Kerry Park, but also from higher elevations. Views from these viewpoints would change in a manner similar to those at Kerry Park. As future development in Denny Triangle extends the skyline further north, views toward the Cascade Mountains in the background would be obscured (see Figure 29). Between the northern edge of the office core and a grouping of taller condominiums in Belltown is a gap in the skyline broken only by the Westin Hotel towers and another office building (the mountain views continue both north and south of the Downtown skyline). Future development in Denny Triangle would tend to fill in this gap with additional buildings, even though the intervening buildings in the retail core vicinity would partially hide the new buildings. Because of the lower elevation of Hamilton Viewpoint, views of the Cascade Mountains are less pronounced than from Belvedere Viewpoint.

The specific impact of Alternative 1 would be to allow buildings 100 feet higher in this portion of the view, contributing to somewhat greater blockage of views toward the Cascade Mountains. None of the view impacts to either the Belvedere or Hamilton viewpoints are interpreted to be significant adverse impacts.

Views from the south. Skyline views from the south would likely experience less change than views from other directions. Relatively few sites would be subject to future redevelopment. One possible 24-30 story office building near 6th and Yesler (just west of I-5) could be the most prominent change in the skyline view from the south. Nearly all future development north of the office core would not be visible from the south under any alternative.

Views from the east. Skyline views from the east would depend upon the viewer's position in First Hill or Pike-Pine/Capitol Hill. From the southern portion of First Hill, there would be relatively little change in skyline views, because large buildings near I-5 already strongly define the skyline. Locations in Pike-Pine and the western slopes of Capitol Hill would experience a relatively large change in views over time, given the probable concentration of future development in the Denny Triangle area.

New commercial, residential and mixed-use projects built to the maximum height and density limits would contribute to a substantial cluster of development extending north from the existing core. The height of these structures could be relatively uniform, which could create a rather flat type of skyline silhouette. Because of shifts in the orientation of the street grids in adjacent Pike/Pine and Capitol Hill areas, separations between structures provided by streets in the area would be less apparent, potentially contributing to the impression of an uninterrupted mass of development. Because few developments are projected to extend out to the extreme northern and eastern edges of the Denny Triangle over 20 years, development in the foreground may remain relatively low (see Figure 30).

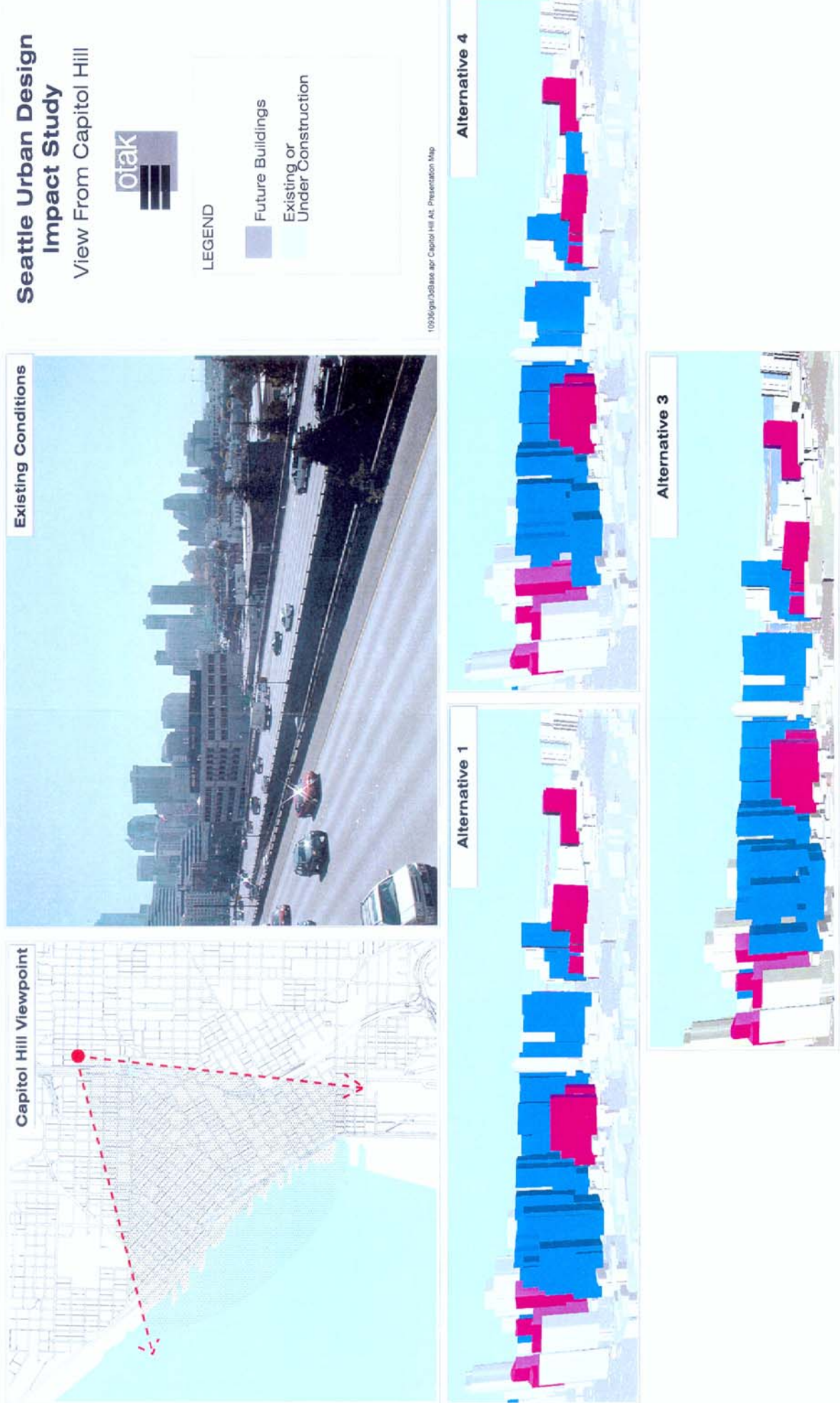
Figure 28



Figure 29



Figure 30



OTHER NON-PROTECTED VIEWS

Alternative 1 and the other alternatives would result in similar impacts on numerous public and private views from areas adjacent to Downtown. From surrounding hillside neighborhoods, the existing conditions may enable observers in many public and private locations to view features (including natural features such as mountains and water) beyond Downtown. For example, views toward portions of Puget Sound and/or the Olympics could be obscured from some portions of Pike/Pine and Capitol Hill.

Another example is Boren Avenue, which on the higher elevations of the Pike/Pine and First Hill neighborhoods provides views northward to Queen Anne Hill across the northeast corner of Downtown and South Lake Union. As higher density development moves into this portion of Downtown over time, such territorial views are increasingly likely to be blocked. Changes in the street grid from neighborhood to neighborhood prevent maintaining continuous views between areas, even along public street rights-of-way. The extent of this type of view impact is not likely to vary appreciably between the alternatives.

Alternative 2 – Concentrated Office Core

Alternative 2 is a subset of the changes proposed in Alternative 1, focusing on the DOC 1 and DOC 2 Downtown office core zones. Alternative 2's visual impacts would be similar to those of Alternative 1, except a somewhat lower skyline form would be maintained in the northern Denny Triangle vicinity and First Avenue/Western Avenue vicinity on the edges of the Commercial Core.

PUBLIC VIEWPOINTS

Alternative 2's impacts on public viewpoints would be similar to impacts of Alternative 1, except with no zoning changes in the Denny Way and 1st/2nd Avenue/Western Avenue vicinities, there would be slightly less change in overall building bulk added to skyline views. Consequently, there could be somewhat less potential than Alternative 1 for impairment of more northerly views from Four Columns Park across the vicinity near I-5 and Denny Way. Alternative 2's zone changes relevant to Harborview Viewpoint would be the same as under Alternative 1, so potential impacts would be the same as Alternative 1. (Kerry Park and West Seattle viewpoints discussed under skylines, below.)

VIEW PROTECTED LANDMARKS

Under Alternative 2, the identified landmarks within Downtown would be subject to the same impacts as Alternative 1, except there would not be any additional height and density increases in the vicinity of the Terminal Sales Building and the 1st Avenue Group of landmark buildings, thus avoiding potential additional impacts. Due to the lack of height and density increases in the northern Denny Triangle and edge of Belltown, there may be slightly less potential for blockage of public street views toward Queen Anne High School than under Alternative 1. However, with changes in the orientation of the street grid, development under any alternatives could potentially block these views (refer to Alternative 1 for further discussion of impacts to view-protected landmarks).

SCENIC ROUTES

With the lack of zone changes in the northern Denny Triangle and 1st /2nd Avenue/Western Avenue vicinities, there would be slightly less potential for impacts to scenic routes than under Alternative 1. The lower height and density limits in these areas would avoid some potential for aesthetic impacts of future development on Alaskan Way, the Viaduct, Westlake Avenue and Fairview Avenue scenic routes.

SKYLINE

Views from the north—Kerry Park. Without zone changes in the northern Denny Triangle vicinity, buildings in the middle ground of views (near Denny Way) would be approximately 100 feet lower than under Alternative 1. This would provide a more gradual visual transition or step-down in the arrangement of building bulk than Alternative 1, which can be interpreted as having lesser visual impacts on the skyline.

Views from the west—Belvedere and Hamilton Viewpoints. Under Alternative 2, the existing pattern of step-down transition toward the waterfront would be retained, avoiding additional permissible building bulk along the front of Downtown in this view. The retained height limits in the Denny Way vicinity would make a minimal difference in views from this location.

Views from the south. Alternative 2's zone changes in the office core south to Yesler Way would be the same as for Alternative 1, and thus the potential skyline impacts are the same as for Alternative 1.

Views from the east. Skyline views from the east would depend upon the viewer's position in First Hill or Pike-Pine/Capitol Hill. From the southern portion of First Hill, the skyline views would be the same as for Alternative 1. Visual changes in the I-5/Melrose Avenue vicinity of Capitol Hill are expected to be similar to those described under Alternative 1. However, over time, as more development pushes into the peripheral DMC areas closer to Denny Way, the lower height limits maintained in this area relative to Alternative 1 should allow for greater variation in the height of structures comprising the skyline, with lower buildings in the foreground. From several locations, the existing Metropolitan Park and Marriott SpringHill Suites Hotel would continue to screen views such that differences in the skyline would be less apparent.

OTHER NON-PROTECTED VIEWS

See discussion under Alternative 1.

Alternative 3 – Residential Emphasis

Alternative 3 is similar to Alternative 1 and 2 in the office core area south of Union Street, but would maintain existing zoning in the Denny Triangle DOC 2 zone east of 8th Avenue and west of 5th Avenue, and maintain height limits in DMC zones in the Denny Way, 1st /2nd Avenue/Western Avenue, and edge of Belltown vicinities. There would be some reduction in permitted bulk in portions of the DMC zones proposed for a more residential-oriented zoning designation, primarily in the north-central portion of the Denny Triangle and the southern edge of Belltown (refer to Chapter 2 for more description).

PUBLIC VIEWPOINTS

Alternative 3's impacts on public viewpoints would be similar to impacts of Alternatives 1 and 2 but with slightly less potential for impacts on views from Four Columns Park and the Harborview viewpoint (see the skyline discussion, below, regarding Kerry Park, Belvedere and Hamilton Viewpoints). This is due in part to maintaining existing heights on the edges of the DOC 2 and DMC zones in the Denny Triangle and greater bulk restrictions on development in areas proposed for a more residential-oriented designation on the edges of Belltown and the Denny Triangle.

Four Columns Park. Under Alternative 3, retaining existing conditions in the DOC 2 zone east of 8th Avenue and the changes proposed in the Denny Way vicinity would mean slightly less allowable building height and bulk than under Alternatives 1 and 2, which could be marginally more beneficial to views from Four Columns Park. However, the potential for impairment of views toward Queen Anne High School and the Olympics would still be present, as under existing conditions.

Harborview Viewpoint. Alternative 3's zone changes relevant to this viewpoint would be the same as under Alternatives 1 and 2.

VIEW PROTECTED LANDMARKS

Under Alternative 3, the identified landmarks within Downtown would be subject to similar impacts as Alternative 1, except zone changes would be relatively comparable to existing conditions near the Terminal Sales Building and the 1st Avenue Group of landmark buildings, and there would be no changes to the zoning on properties adjacent to the Times Square Building. This means the potential for impacts to view-protected landmarks is slightly less than for Alternatives 1 and 2. The proposed pattern of zone changes would also mean slightly less potential for blockage of public street views toward Queen Anne High School than under Alternatives 1 and 2.

SCENIC ROUTES

With the limited changes to DMC zones in the northern Denny Triangle, 1st /2nd Avenue/Western Avenue and edge of Belltown vicinities, there would be slightly less potential for impacts to scenic routes than under Alternative 1. The lesser potential for additional building bulk and height in these areas would avoid some potential for aesthetic impacts of future development on the Alaskan Way, Viaduct, Westlake and Fairview Avenue scenic routes.

SKYLINE

Views from the north—Kerry Park. With Alternative 3's zone changes in the northern Denny Triangle, 1st /2nd Avenue/Western Avenue and edge of Belltown vicinities, development in these areas would have lower heights than under Alternative 1, and in some areas reductions in permitted bulk, generally providing a transition in building scale to adjacent areas. This means Alternative 3 has slightly less potential for adverse view impacts than Alternatives 1 and 2 at this location.

Views from the west—Belvedere and Hamilton Viewpoints. With Alternative 3's zone changes, the potential impacts on these skyline views would be slightly less than for Alternatives 1 and 2.

Views from the south. With Alternative 3's proposed zone changes, the potential skyline impacts would be marginally less than for Alternatives 1 and 2.

Views from the east. Skyline views from the east would depend upon the viewer's position in First Hill, Pike-Pine or Capitol Hill. From the southern portion of First Hill, the skyline views would be the same as for Alternatives 1 and 2. With Alternative 3's zone changes in the Denny Way vicinity, retained step-downs in height limits would continue to provide a more gradual visual transition in building bulk generally similar to Alternatives 2 and 4. With retained zoning in a portion of the Denny Triangle DOC 2 zone east of 8th Avenue, the potential for large buildings significantly altering the skyline nearest the Pike-Pine vicinity would be similar to existing zoning. This could be interpreted as a positive attribute of Alternative 3 in that the bulk of buildings nearest the adjacent neighborhoods would be less visually dominant than under Alternatives 1 or 2. In several locations, existing development like the Metropolitan Park towers and Marriott SpringHill Suites hotel would continue to screen views such that differences in the skyline would be less apparent.

OTHER NON-PROTECTED VIEWS

See discussion under Alternative 1.

Alternative 4 – No Action

PUBLIC VIEWPOINTS

Selecting the No Action Alternative would result in no change from current regulatory conditions and therefore no additional impacts. However, in this case it should be noted that the existing zoned height and densities allow for future development that may obscure existing views over time at Four Columns Park and to a lesser extent at the Harborview Viewpoint. In general, Alternative 4 would have less potential for overall change in views at these locations than Alternatives 1 or 2. In areas where additional bulk limits apply, Alternative 3 would potentially have less overall impacts on these views than Alternative 4. Future project-specific review would afford the opportunity to review specific development proposals and conditioning of projects if warranted.

VIEW PROTECTED LANDMARKS

Selecting the No Action Alternative would result in no change from current regulatory conditions and therefore no additional impacts. However, as noted in the first paragraph of the view-protected landmarks discussion for Alternative 1, the potential for view impacts on landmarks from future development is generally similar under any alternative.

SCENIC ROUTES

Selecting the No Action Alternative would result in no change from current regulatory conditions and therefore no additional impacts. Over time, future development would add building bulk that would change the aesthetic qualities of the designated scenic routes relevant to Downtown.

SKYLINE

Selecting the No Action Alternative would result in no change from current regulatory conditions and therefore no additional impacts. However, it should be noted that existing regulations afford opportunities in the Denny Triangle to increase building heights by up to 30 percent more than mapped height limits, and by 10 to 20 percent in DOC 1 and DOC 2 zones throughout Downtown, if certain conditions are met. Over time, future development would change the skyline views in generally similar ways under any alternative.

OTHER NON-PROTECTED VIEWS

See discussion under Alternative 1.

MITIGATION STRATEGIES

The mitigation strategies outlined below address three different aspects of the view issue. The first concerns the potential blockage of existing views—for the most part views of natural features that can currently be seen from areas within or adjacent to Downtown. The second addresses the Downtown skyline as a view object, focusing on enhancing the quality of this view as it evolves over time. The third addresses views of protected landmark structures.

REQUIRED/PROPOSED MITIGATION STRATEGIES

Given the type and magnitude of impacts discussed in this section, no mitigation measures or strategies are required or proposed to be mandatory actions accompanying approval of any of the alternatives studied in this EIS.

OTHER POSSIBLE MITIGATION STRATEGIES

View Obstruction

Comprehensive assessment of view conditions, view preservation strategy, and clarification of SEPA policies. An effective strategy for view protection would likely incorporate a variety of actions tailored to address specific conditions and accomplish particular objectives. Implementing such a strategy would require an initial comprehensive assessment of view conditions that would ultimately identify specific views to be protected, as well as measures to protect them. This strategy should acknowledge reasonable limitations on the level of view protection that can realistically be achieved for the Downtown area and surroundings, if other policy objectives for Downtown are to be realized. Consequently, SEPA policies related to Downtown should be clarified and narrowed to focus protection on a limited number of views that are agreed to have the highest priority for protection.

Potential tools that could be incorporated into a comprehensive view preservation strategy might include:

- Designate additional view corridors along streets providing critical views and establish appropriate development standards for maintaining desired view conditions, such as setbacks for upper floors.
- Consider opportunities for promoting view protection in the siting of public open space and other public facilities.
- Consider lower height limits in some locations to maintain critical view corridors. Selective designation of views with height limits carefully detailed to protect those views would be a means of mitigating the view blockage potential.
- Examine potential use of the transfer of development rights or the purchase of view easements from properties that may be severely constrained by measures to protect views.
- Identify opportunities for off-site mitigation. Within an identified viewshed area, require development contributing to the overall loss of views to mitigate this loss by contributing to the preservation of a specified view corridor within the area.
- Provide stronger guidance in street and alley vacation policies to address conditions related to view impacts of development on larger sites. Large sites created by alley vacations promote taller, bulkier structures that can potentially have a greater impact on views. Identify areas that are especially view-sensitive where alley vacations would either be prohibited or considered only with impact-mitigating measures.
- Map selected view corridors to emphasize consideration of view issues in SEPA project review and promote better coordination with City Design Review process in addressing view issues.
- In designated view-sensitive areas, restrict development above base height and density limits unless view blockage issues are addressed.

- Require minimum site sizes and/or coverage limits for tower development in view-sensitive locations to enable massing solutions that minimize obstruction of specified protected views.
- Provide additional development standards or incentives related to building bulk (tower spacing provisions, maximum wall dimensions, maximum floor sizes, etc.) to encourage conditions that allow more opportunities for views in areas designated as view sensitive.

Exempt Downtown from SEPA view protection policies. This alternative mitigation measure assumes that there is an inherent conflict between the broad application of the existing SEPA view protection measures in an area where public policy promotes concentrated high-density development. To reinforce growth policies, development within Downtown would not be subject to any additional consideration of potential view impacts through SEPA. This exemption is further supported by the assumption that view protection Downtown is appropriately and adequately addressed through the policy decisions that established the height limits, view corridor designations and related setbacks, design guidelines related to views, and other existing or future provisions that specifically apply to view protection.

Skyline Appearance

Possible strategies to avoid or minimize impacts on skyline appearance could include:

- Maintain variable height limits across Downtown that continue to ensure the "stepping up" of Downtown development from the periphery to the core and provide transition or contrast with development heights in adjacent areas.
- Define requirements or incentives that require the tapering of towers with increased height. The tapering tower form appears less bulky to the observer and promotes greater architectural interest and distinction to new towers. Granting additional height and density above current limits could be conditioned on measures to reduce the bulky appearance of structures and add architectural interest.
- Require or incentivize special architectural treatment of building tops to add interest to the portion of the structure that is the most visible addition to the skyline.
- Establish additional controls on the overall bulk of development through provisions that address spacing between towers, maximum tower dimensions, and other characteristics of large buildings. This could help avoid or minimize visual perceptions of "solid walls" of development due to the massing of bulky buildings in an area.
- Provide stronger guidance in street and alley vacation policies. Identify areas that are especially view-sensitive where alley vacations would either be prohibited or considered only if measures addressing skyline impacts are taken.
- Promote design treatments through project permit and design review processes that offset the bulky appearance of large structures and increase visual interest, including variations of facade materials, lighting, façade modulation and setbacks to interrupt continuous horizontal and vertical surfaces, color, lighting, fenestration treatment and other design details.

Views Toward Protected Landmarks

Possible strategies to better address views toward protected landmarks could include:

- Identify landmark structures worthy of greater view protection and consider what views would be protected and how. These could include prominent structures visible beyond their immediate surroundings, such as Pac-Med Hospital and Queen Anne High School.

SIGNIFICANT UNAVOIDABLE ADVERSE IMPACTS

Additional height and bulk enabled by proposed zoning changes would add incrementally to the potential future impairment or blockage of views from some areas, predominantly portions of the Capitol Hill (south of Denny Way), Pike/Pine and First Hill neighborhoods.